

Why Mission?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 20 November 2016

Preacher: Jonathan Gemmell

[0 : 01] Well, good evening. Let's pray and then we'll get to work. Father God, you've been so good to us.

You've blessed us outrageously. And Lord, our prayer now is that as we come to study your word, you might speak to us. You might transform our thinking.

You might renew our hearts. And we might leave here ever more determined to worship the Lord Jesus in every area of our lives. So Lord, meet with us in this time we pray.

Amen. This is the last installment of our Why Church series. We've looked at why we gather together, why we pray together, why we sing together, why we devote so much time to preaching, why we remember communion, and why we try and do evangelism.

And tonight we're looking at why mission. Why mission. Particularly overseas mission. Why is it that people should give up their lives and their comforts and should go overseas to learn different languages to make much of Jesus in difficult and dangerous and hot and humid and dusty and difficult places.

[1 : 28] Why should the church of Jesus Christ be interested in mission? That's what we're going to try and do tonight.

Our mission is a massive and multifaceted topic. But our time tonight is going to be spent primarily in Psalm 67.

In our high-tech world, the phrase going viral was coined in 1999. It was coined to describe the spreading of a product, a video, or an idea by being shared one person to another by means of internet links and social media campaigns and postings.

Early viral videos include Charlie bit my finger. Put your hand up if you've seen Charlie bit my finger. Hasn't quite made it viral in Bruntsfield, but we're ever hopeful.

The sneezing panda cub. Less. That's a goodie. It's only 17 seconds long. And as well, countless videos of cats doing funny things like playing the keyboard.

[2 : 46] In recent years, going viral has been the aspiration of advertisers, celebrities, and pop stars alike. The most viewed video on YouTube of all time is size Gangnam Style.

That has been viewed 3 billion times. 3 billion times. Half the population of the world have seen that video.

Terrifying. In contrast, the promo video on the Bruntsfield homepage website, which came out about the same time, has been seen an astronomical 698 times.

Our church is quite a long way from going viral, it seems. So if you could all go home tonight and just click on the homepage, you'll make me feel a lot better. Going viral may be a new term, but it is not a new phenomenon.

God's plan from the very beginning was the knowledge of himself. His glory would go viral. He says in Habakkuk 2.14, For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

[4 : 04] That is going viral. At the very heart of God is one that is passionate about being known in this, his world.

Known through the sharing of his truth one person to another. Known through the message of the gospel going viral and reaching the very ends of the earth. From creation to new creation, God is passionate about all the nations of the world being brought back into a proper worshipping relationship with him.

Through the reconciliation exclusively achieved through the life, death and resurrection of his son, Jesus. The last words Jesus spoke to his disciples before ascending were these.

Go and make disciples of all nations. You can't be clearer than that. The book of Acts is Luke's fly on the wall documentary detailing the explosion of the gospel from Jerusalem to Judea, to Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

The very reason we are here in Brunsfield tonight is because people heard that and took it seriously. The reason the Brunsfield Evangelical Church exists in Edinburgh in Scotland is because people like St. Ninian and St. Columba and St. Kentigan obeyed the call to make Jesus known where he is not known.

[5 : 32] Which meant coming to Scotland. You won't find a darker, more desperate and hostile place than that. It is also an endeavour that we ultimately know works.

Because at the end of the story, Revelation chapter 7 verse 9, we see that everyone is there. That there was a great multitude that no one can count from every nation, tribe, people and language standing before the throne and before the Lamb.

Mission is not only what we're called to, but we're called to something that will ultimately be a success. Because the gospel works and Jesus in the end wins. Further, it is an endeavour that is to be a compulsory concern to all true believers.

Mission is not an optional extra for the SWAT team. It's not an optional extra for those that like to come to a missionary prayer meeting whenever they're held. It's not for the people who simply have all the cards stapled on their fridge of all the missionaries that they pray for all around the world. Mission is at the heart of God. And therefore, mission must be the heart of his people. We read in Matthew 24, 14, This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations.

[6 : 54] And then the end will come. So world evangelization is one of the essential tasks that needs completed before Jesus returns.

Proclaiming God's glory to the nations needs to be near, if not at the top of the church's agenda. Proclaiming God's glory to the nations needs to be near, if not at the top of the church's agenda. Together, there's not a better place to go than the anonymously penned Psalm 67. This psalm is given to us by God to display his great mission purpose for his world.

God himself gives us this prayer to stir our prayers, conform our wills and deploy our resources. Even giving our lives to achieve his great missionary purpose.

So could I ask you to stand and we'll all read Psalm 67 together. If you didn't bring your binoculars, we're all in trouble.

[8 : 22] Let's read it together. May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us. That your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations.

Let the peoples praise you, O God. Let all the peoples praise you. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy. For you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth.

Let the peoples praise you, O God. Let all the peoples praise you. The earth has yielded its increase. God, our God, shall bless us.

God shall bless us. Let all the ends of the earth fear him. You may be seated. Let me give you the big idea of this psalm straight off the bat.

Here is what I think is the big idea. God's great purpose of being known, worshipped, enjoyed and revered by all nations is achieved through blessing others through us.

[9 : 34] God's great purpose of being known, worshipped, enjoyed and revered by all nations is achieved through blessing others through us.

So we just have two points for us to consider. Here's the first. The purpose of God. God's purpose of being known, worshipped, enjoyed and revered by all nations.

And then the second point. The process of God is achieved through blessing others through us. Just a heads up.

The first point is longer than the second one. So when we get to point two, don't think we're halfway through. We're literally on the landing zone. According to.

So let's start with the purpose of God. According to Psalm 67, God's great purpose is to be known, worshipped, enjoyed and revered among all the peoples of the earth.

[10 : 33] Let me show you where I get this from. Verse two. That your way may be known on earth.

God wants to be known. He wants his way to be known on earth and in every corner. He wants to be worshipped. This double refrain. Let the peoples praise you.

Oh, God. Let all the peoples praise you. Verse three. Verse five. Let the peoples praise you. Oh, God. Let all the peoples praise you. God wants to be known. He wants to be worshipped. He wants to be enjoyed. Verse four. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy. God wants to be enjoyed by the peoples of the earth. And verse seven. He wants to be feared. God shall bless us. Let all the ends of the earth fear him. He wants to be revered in his world.

[11 : 37] The great global purpose of God is that all nations might know God, worship God, enjoy God, and revere God as God's.

That is God's great purpose according to Psalm 67. What is more interesting is I think the Psalm tells us why.

Why God is to be known, worshipped, enjoyed, and revered by everyone. So let me show you four things. God is to be known, worshipped, enjoyed, and revered because he is the only true and living God.

He is not one God among many. He is not a God elbowing his way to the top of some kind of hierarchy. He wants to be known, worshipped, enjoyed, and revered because he is the only God. There's no others like him. He is utterly unique. He is the only person in all the universe worthy of worship. Everything else is a fake or a fraud or a sham or a counterfeit.

[12 : 51] He is not the God of any other religion and there is no one who is equal to him.

Worshipping anything else apart from God is barefaced idolatry.

The fact that God in his word is so passionate that he be known, worshipped, enjoyed, and revered among all the nations is because there's no one else.

There is no other God. All other worship is falsehood and fraudulent. He says in Isaiah 45, I am the Lord and there is no other.

Besides me there is no God. I equip you though you do not know me that people may know from the rising of the sun and from the west that there is none besides me.

I am the Lord and there is no other. You cannot be more categorical than that. And therefore when God says let the peoples praise you, let all the peoples praise you.

[13 : 54] He is saying because that is the only form of praise that's legitimate. If it were not the case, then mission, going to India or Nepal or Tibet or Japan or to South America or to Russia and saying you must worship this God.

If he is not the only God, then that is presumption and audacity. That is a colonizing enterprise in the world. To say my God's better than your God, why don't you worship him?

It is just mere empire building. But if God is the one true God, then mission is not arrogance. It is humble, daring, obedient.

It is a humble, daring, obedient response. Born out of a love for people who are perishing. If there is no God beside him, then there is nothing more important than we can do than spend our lives to tell those who do not know.

God's call is for all the nations of the earth to worship him because apart from him, there is nothing that is worthy of worship. And therefore God says, I want to be known, worshipped, enjoyed and revered.

[15 : 19] Because apart from me, there's nothing. Because I am the only true and living God. The second reason. God is to be known, worshipped, enjoyed and revered amongst the nations because he is a God of justice.

Look at verse four. Look what God says about himself. The psalmist writes for you, judge the peoples with equity. When God judges, the justice he performs will be absolutely impartial and unimpeachably righteous.

He judges with equity. When God judges the whole world, there'll be no bribes. There'll be no corruption, no get out clauses, no mitigating circumstances.

Justice will come and it will be perfect. And the standards insisted upon by this judge are absolute perfection.

The benchmark for acquittal and vindication in the high court of heaven will be 100% absolute perfection. Only those that have lived perfect lives during their time on earth will be counted righteous.

[16 : 41] And everyone else will be found wanting. For everyone else, as we saw this morning, the house will utterly collapse and be utterly destroyed. And so if this is the standard, 100% judgment

with equity, it means we've all categorically failed.

We do not have any hope. Except for the Lord Jesus. The only remedy to this impossible situation is the perfection of Jesus.

Who lived for us, who died for us, and who was raised for us. The perfect performance of his earthly life and the unimaginable punishment he suffered in his death.

For all those who believe will be the only hope when this God judges with equity. This remedy for sin is the only hope. This remedy for sin is not one possible remedy among many.

You don't go to the medicine cupboard and find anything else. This is unique. Jesus has an absolute monopoly on saving people from that judgment that is to come.

[18 : 02] If a person has Christ as his only hope before God, he will be saved. And if he has not, he will not.

This, though, is perfect justice. God will not be unjust to those who have never heard the preaching of the gospel. They will not be judged for not believing in a Jesus they have never heard of.

They will be judged for how they have responded to the revelation they have. And Romans 1 says there will be no one with an excuse. It says, Paul writes this, For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them for his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world and the things that have been made.

So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened.

[19 : 20] Claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

A little bit later in Romans chapter 3, it says, There is none righteous, no, not one. And therefore, if God will judge all peoples of the earth with equity, He will do right and ensure that perfect justice is administered to all the peoples of the earth.

And on that day, the only hope of the world will be Jesus. God is to be known, worshipped, enjoyed and revered amongst the nations because he is a God of justice.

And therefore, telling people is of the utmost importance. Thirdly, why is God to be known, worshipped, enjoyed and revered?

Because he has sovereign power. You see, in the last part of verse 4, For you rule the people, you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations of the earth.

[20 : 35] The independence and sovereignty of nations is mere illusion of statecraft. It is exactly the same in Psalm 2, when all the kings of the earth clump together and shake their fist at God.

And God's response is that he chuckles. He laughs to himself in the face of their pathetic insubordination. The big message of the Bible, from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22, is that God is the boss.

He is in sovereign command over absolutely everything. That was the big takeaway I hope we got from our studies in Daniel. That God is in charge. That history unfolds according to his sovereign decree.

This is the only reason that mission is even possible, is because God is in charge. This is the only reason the Lord Jesus can say, I will build my church with absolute certainty.

Because he's in absolute control. And nobody and nothing can stand in his way. That's how he begins and ends the Great Commission. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

[21 : 53] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. I'm in absolute control and therefore your going will work because I have sovereign power. How does he end the Great Commission?

And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. Matthew's gospel that starts with Emmanuel, God with us, ends with Jesus being with us to the very end of the age.

And the one who is with us is also in sovereign control over absolutely everything. Who guarantees and superintends his work of mission.

And so God is to be worshipped, known, enjoyed and revered because he has sovereign power. He wins top trumps every time. There is no one like him.

And no one can match him. And therefore when we do mission we don't go out alone. We go with the God of the universe guaranteeing success.

[22 : 53] Fourthly on this point. God is to be known, worshipped, enjoyed and revered because he is a gracious God. End of verse 2.

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us. That your way may be known on earth. Your saving power among all nations.

The one only true and living God who is just and sovereign in his rule. Is also a God of unfathomable grace. See it is right there after the petition of verse 1 we get verse 2.

That your way may be known. And your saving power among all the nations. His desire is to be known and worshipped and enjoyed and revered.

Because he is a gracious God who saves. A gracious and saving God. Who redeems all people in his son.

[23 : 52] He shows people grace that they could never deserve. There is nobody on the face of the planet for whom Jesus' grace is not efficacious. This is the global God.

Bringing global joy and gladness to the nations through his saving grace. Titus 2.11 For the grace of God has appeared. Bringing salvation for all people.

Jesus whose only criteria for us to come to him. Is an acknowledgement of our sin. And to be humbled under his grace. And to accept that he is our only hope.

That is why the gospel is good news. And the heart of the missionary message to the world. It is that God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son.

That whoever believes in him will not perish. But have eternal life. It is God's love to the world which means that he will save to the uppermost those. Who come in faith through Jesus Christ.

[24 : 59] The message that God will save you from your sin. And your guilt. And your condemnation by grace through Jesus Christ. Is the message of the gospel. That God's church is to take to the ends of the earth.

We go with a message of grace. Not a message of condemnation. We go with hope and life and joy. To hold it up to people that are perishing. God's great purpose in the world is to be known.

Worshipped. Enjoyed and revered. Because. He is the only true and living God. He is a God of absolute and perfect justice. He has sovereign power over the affairs of his world.

And that he is a God who moves towards us with saving grace. In his son. Jesus. God is a global God. Who cares about his world.

And all the nations of it. And God's great purpose. In his world. Is that through mission. Through one person sharing with another about who God is.

[26 : 05] And what he has done for us in Jesus. And what it means to follow him. His great purpose is through that mission. Is that he would be known. Worshipped. Enjoyed and revered.

By all the nations. That is the great purpose of God. According to Psalm 67. Which brings us neatly to our second point. The process of God.

How does he do this? And I think this too is right here in the psalm. Look how verse 1 starts. May God be gracious to us.

And bless us. And make his face to shine upon us. That your way may be known on earth. Your saving power among all nations.

God bless us. God bless us. So that through us. You can bless others with knowledge of who you are. And the salvation you offer.

[27 : 06] Do you see how that flow works? Blessed in order to be a blessing. God be gracious to us. So they might know. God be good to us.

So that they might know. God shine your face upon us. So that they might know who you are. God. This breaks the psalm very much in line with God's covenantal relationship with his people.

Back in Genesis 12. God says to his servant Abraham. I will make you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great.

So that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you. And him who dishonors you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

What was God's way that he was going to be known to everyone? Well in Abraham's life and in Abraham's people he said I'm going to bless you. And as I bless you people will see what I am like.

[28 : 04] That Israel was to be a beacon. Shining into the dark nations that God might be known, worshipped, enjoyed and revered by everyone. This is the way God operates in his world.

He blesses us. But not to be reservoirs, storing up that blessing, but to be rivers. So that blessing might flow out to others. And in reference to Psalm 67.

Blessing us. So that his knowledge might be transmitted to anyone and everyone. Now obviously this side of the cross.

We know that the decisive fulfillment of that covenant is ours in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the decisive way in which people are blessed spiritually.

That is one of the major themes of the book of Galatians. Particularly chapter 3. I don't know if I write this for you. No. You'll just have to listen.

[29 : 04] Chapter 3 verse 7. Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.

Chapter 3 verse 9. So then those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham the man of faith.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us. So that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles or to the nations. If you are Christ's then you are Abraham's offspring heirs according to promise.

So just to track the Old Testament metanarrative. God's plan was that all the peoples of the world would be blessed. To that end he chose the people of Israel to bear his revelation and his blessing. He made a covenant with them. That they would be blessed and in that way bring that blessing to all the peoples of the world. God fulfilled that covenant decisively.

When Jesus Christ the seed of Abraham fulfilled all righteousness. And died for sin and rose again. So that anyone who believes on him from any nation or people of the earth.

[30 : 13] Will become a child of Abraham and inherit that Abrahamic blessing. And so be blessed by the blessing of Israel. That Abrahamic blessing is being fulfilled every time someone trusts in Christ.

Receives all the blessing of God through him. Blessed in order to bless. God blessing Israel so that all the nations could come and see the glory of God.

And be blessed through that revelation. It's not a clearer place that we see that than in Solomon's life. When the Queen of Sheba comes and sees how Solomon and his people are blessed.

And she declares that God, your God is real. However, if the Old Testament was a come and see. In the Lord Jesus, the modus operandi is not come and see, but go and tell.

Now I have blessed you in Jesus and your job now is to go and tell others. To take the gospel on tour. And to take the message out to the whole world.

[31 : 23] To take this message across linguistic, cultural and continental boundaries. To get the good news of Jesus Christ to all nations. So that God's ways will be known in all the earth.

And his salvation among all nations. There is, however, one final point. This, I think, is particularly pertinent to us in the West.

Because the end of the psalm finishes in pretty much the same way it starts. Except there's a definite focus in view. The psalmist writes this. The earth has yielded its increase.

God, our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us still. Let all the ends of the earth fear him. There is no getting away that the end of the psalm particularly focuses on material blessing.

There's no escape from it. That the earth has yielded its increase. God has been so good to us in providing for us in abundant ways.

[32 : 30] But do not miss the point. That God has blessed us so abundantly and materially and physically. But he's done that.

So that we can use that wealth. So that all the ends of the earth might fear him. Might be brought into a relationship with him.

To know him and worship him. And enjoy him. And revere him. God is highlighting that the greatest use of material blessing.

Of which we have enormous amounts. The greatest way we can worship God by using that material blessing. Is using it to bring spiritual knowledge to people.

So that they might know, worship, enjoy and revere God. It is the sharp end of the psalm. And there's no way to get away from it.

[33 : 30] That in the west. We have been blessed in ways that generations before could not have imagined. And surely God has done that now.

At this time. Where the world is greatly accessible. In order that knowledge of his son might get to the furthest reaches.

God has blessed us so abundantly materially and physically. And perhaps he's done that now. Because there's not a corner of the world.

That we cannot get to. To proclaim this message. So that God might be known. And worshipped. And enjoyed. And revered. Psalm 67 is the great missionary prayer of God. Given to us to stir our hearts. To get on the same page with his missionary endeavour. God calls us to use our blessing. In order that all nations might be brought to know.

[34 : 36] Enjoy, worship and revere God. He's blessed us in Jesus. And he's blessed us materially. And he wants knowledge of his son to be broadcast.

So I invite you to stand. And we'll finish by reading and praying this psalm. Together. Let's read this together. May God be gracious to us and bless us.

And make his face to shine upon us. That your way may be known on earth. Your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God.

Let all the peoples praise you. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy. For you judge the peoples with equity. And guide the nations upon the earth.

Let the peoples praise you, O God. Let all the peoples praise you. The earth has yielded its increase. God, our God, shall bless us.

[35 : 40] God shall bless us. Let all the ends of the earth fear him. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.